

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **MAYOR BALLARD DELIVERS 2013 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS**

The following is the text of Mayor Gregory A. Ballard's 2013 State of the City Address, as prepared for delivery and delivered today at The Alexander:

Thank you, Mike, for that kind introduction and for your service to the citizens of our great city.

Madam President, Members of the City-County Council, special guests and friends: Thank you for joining us this afternoon for my sixth State of the City Address.

And, of course, thank you to Winnie for being my wife these last 30 years and for being such a great first lady for our city.

I'd also like to congratulate the winning teams from our first-ever citywide robotics competition.

It's amazing they can build a robot that can deliver the State of the City Address to me.

I would be grateful, if next year, they build a robot that could actually deliver it for me.

This afternoon I am pleased to report that Indianapolis is strong, and as you can see from this beautiful hotel and surrounding neighborhood, we are getting stronger every day.

Six years ago, CityWay was barely a dream. Now, it is just the latest symbol of the incredible renaissance taking place in Indianapolis.

As a city, as a community, we've done so much to make Indianapolis a destination for businesses and for families.

We are attracting talent and creating the kind of city that people want to move to.

And we are still just getting started.

Later this year, the next phase of CityWay will open with new apartments and more retail.

The YMCA will break ground by the end of the year and our partners at Buckingham are also pressing ahead with the office building and looking to expand this great new neighborhood even further.

What is taking place right here is transforming this area, and connecting the thousands of employees who work just south of here to our vibrant downtown.

That's not too bad for a project that was supposedly "controversial" simply because the city hadn't done it before.

Let me promise you: this marks just the beginning.

Take a look around.

You see growth and new life everywhere in our city.

The rundown and graffiti-covered Bank One Operations Center is being transformed into another great mixed-use development of apartments and retail called "Artistry."

A few weeks ago, I helped break ground on the new Block 400 development that will include nearly 500 luxury apartments and downtown's second grocery store.

This single project will add more retail to our downtown than any other development since Circle Centre Mall opened.

And have you been to the City Market lately? Seriously, you absolutely must check it out.

It is buzzing with people and excitement.

The transformation of the West Wing of the market into "The Platform" provides a central location for non-profits, neighborhood groups and the city to connect and create new partnerships that strengthen Indianapolis.

Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot underscore this point enough: Indianapolis is growing. There is an excitement with all of the activity taking place – and we are just getting started.

After nearly 12 years and two false starts, the time is right – and the economy is ready – for the city to take another serious shot at redeveloping the former site of Market Square Arena.

So Monday, my administration will go to the marketplace seeking plans and proposals to turn the north lot of the former MSA site into something better than surface parking.

We know there is a lot of interest.

We've already been approached with some interesting ideas.

But make no mistake, I want to be bold.

It has been nearly 36 years since “Elvis left the building.”

It is time for the MSA space to make its architectural mark again on our city, to bring new residents and retail to the near east side, and to put that prime piece of real estate back on the property tax rolls.

Development is taking place all around us.

From the exciting new plans at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, to the Mass Ave redevelopment, to a new redevelopment partnership between our western townships, surrounding communities and the airport, to a parking garage the Broad Ripple neighborhood has wanted for over 30 years now, things are happening.

And, ten years after getting our first federal grant, we are finally ready to move forward on a new downtown transit center.

Everywhere you look, you can see projects designed to make Indianapolis an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.

Indianapolis is taking on the challenges big and small that are making a difference, the biggest among them, growing our economy.

2012 was again a strong year.

Our partners at the Indy Chamber secured more than 3,300 new job commitments, worked with existing companies to retain over 8,000 jobs, and attracted commitments to invest over 600 million dollars in Indianapolis last year.

Our success is being noticed.

In January, the Milken Institute issued a report noting that Indianapolis jumped 70 spots on its vaunted “Best-Performing Cities” list.

For those that say we cannot compete for talent or jobs, I beg to differ.

An equally important economic challenge is making sure our residents have the education and tools needed to fill these jobs.

The population of Indianapolis has grown by nearly two-thirds over the past 60 years, while our urban core population has dropped nearly the same amount during the same period.

This exodus, comprised primarily of middle-income families with school-aged children, impacts the health of our city, often leading to fewer life prospects for children, higher crime rates in neighborhoods, and millions of dollars in lost tax revenue.

It is vital to our city’s economic future – and to the future of our children – that we improve the educational outcome for students at our schools.

Indianapolis is off to a great start.

Our 26 Mayor-sponsored charter schools now serve 8,500 students and we have eleven more schools on the way.

Eighty-two percent of Mayor-sponsored charter schools received an “A”, “B” or “C” in the State’s grading model.

That’s higher than the county-wide average, and most importantly, we do not have any “F”-graded schools.

And a Stanford University study recently concluded that both children of color and low-income students are significantly better off attending one of our Mayor-sponsored charter schools.

Indianapolis is truly a national leader in addressing the need to improve urban education – and that is not a title we plan to relinquish anytime soon.

Our next step is to build on our success – and we are doing so with a plan that is again drawing national attention.

Neighborhoods of Educational Opportunity will change the discussion in education reform from overall school performance to a child’s access to a high-quality seat in a classroom in or near their neighborhood.

So, how do we do it? We are working with many groups including members of the IPS board, The Mind Trust, the United Negro College Fund, Urban League and many others to create 30,000 new high-quality education seats in our city over the next ten years.

To us it matters not whether that child’s seat is in a public school, private school or charter school. Every child in Indianapolis deserves access to a seat in a high-quality classroom.

In the case of a great public school – let’s support it and duplicate it to other neighborhoods in need. In areas where the school is right on the cusp of greatness, let’s help push them over the top. And in areas where the schools are failing, let’s replicate or expand a successful school into that neighborhood. That is essential – in the neighborhood.

The second part of our bold initiative partners with national groups to attract and train high-quality teachers and principals to these schools. We simply cannot have enough great school seats without enough great teachers and principals.

And, finally, we will partner with local neighborhood and charitable organizations to go door-to-door informing parents and students in struggling areas about the new opportunities available to them – in or near their neighborhood.

Our city knows how to tackle this task. We have one of only 20 plans nationally to be named a finalist in the Bloomberg Challenge. We have the only plan dealing with education. So, we are off to a great start.

Let me put this plainly.

We are making progress here because we are working with public, private and charter school officials and listening to the community.

We cannot take our foot off the pedal now.

No student should lose out on opportunity because of a zip code.

No student should lose out on opportunity because of the size of their parents' paycheck.

Everyone has a role in solving education in Indianapolis.

And, everyone has something to bring to the table.

Improving our schools is one part of the strategy to bring people back into our urban neighborhoods, but we must also provide the basic services that make these neighborhoods truly attractive to new residents.

Indianapolis is investing in its neighborhoods in record amounts through RebuildIndy – over \$560 million in just the last two and a half years!

That has given us the ability to triple the amount of repaving we could do.

And instead of fixing just six to ten bridges as we would normally do in that time period, we've done 53!

And instead of demolishing an average of 400 abandoned homes over that time period, we have taken down nearly 2,000 and counting.

Our efforts to invest in our neighborhoods, fix the streets, stop the flooding, repair and improve the sidewalks, and add bike lanes are making a real difference in every part of this city. Take it from the Irvington Development Organization, and I quote:

"They said it couldn't be done, but you did it! Irvington thanks you for your efficiency and commitment to getting the Washington Streetscape project done."

But paving and improving streets isn't enough. We also need to help people who do not have or do not want cars.

A stronger mass transit system will help people seeking jobs travel to the places where the jobs exist.

It also will help our seniors get to their doctor's appointments and shop in other parts of town.

Better mass transit will help us attract talent, connect people and generate a return on investment through economic development that will take place along our major mass transit corridors.

According to one study, 81% of people between the ages of 18-34 say local transit is important to the quality of life of a community.

When I grew up, young people moved to the job.

Today, young people move to the type of city they want to live in, and then build their life there.

Cities, if they are to compete for this young talent, must provide the amenities they want. And talented young professionals want to live in cities that have strong transit systems – places like Charlotte, Minneapolis, Denver, and Salt Lake City.

Every day, we compete against those cities for jobs and talent.

Far too often we hear stories of young people who prefer to live in cities where they don't need a car.

I envision large numbers of young professionals, college graduates, drawn to all corners of Marion County because of the investments in our bike lanes, trails and transit – and what that says about our city.

We must make sure the young graduates of Butler, IUPUI and the University of Indianapolis stay in our city, and the graduates of IU, Purdue, Ball State, Rose-Hulman and other Indiana schools come to our city, earn here and contribute here, instead of moving to Chicago, Charlotte, or the California coast.

The time is now.

Our seniors want it.

Our young people want it.

Those who don't own a car want it.

We have cleared the first few hurdles at the Statehouse, but there is still a long way to go.

I ask each of you to join me in encouraging our state lawmakers to let the people of Central Indiana vote on a regional mass transit system that will help grow our community and improve our quality of life!

I speak often about mass transit, but I do not want you to think that it's just a singular idea or project. We must coordinate RebuildIndy, Indy Parks, IndyGo and mass transit improvements to encourage growth in our neighborhoods.

It's called "placemaking," and its time has come in Indianapolis.

In December, the Lilly Endowment generously gave us \$10 million to renovate and upgrade 13 Indy Parks. Many of these parks are located on key IndyGo routes.

That is a major reason why Tarkington Park will receive funds to begin a revitalization that includes playground upgrades, new shelters, a water feature and more. Six different IndyGo bus routes converge on Tarkington Park.

Imagine heading home on the Number 19 bus to the Castleton-area after a summer concert at Tarkington one weeknight, or bringing your kids to the park's new water feature on the Number 39 bus that runs along east 38<sup>th</sup> Street.

What a great opportunity to further knit together the neighborhoods of Meridian-Kessler, Butler Tarkington, Mapleton-Fall Creek and Watson-McCord.

Tarkington Park has potential to augment its value to residents precisely because of its location relative to our growing transit options. And that is just one example. We have many others where we can link together our efforts to strengthen neighborhoods in our community.

In the next few years, we are going to coordinate city investments along our key transit corridors, specifically between Tarkington Park and Garfield Park running north-south, and between Ellenberger Park and the former Central State Hospital site heading east-west.

We also will focus on adding sidewalks and repairing existing sidewalks in the areas that complement the city's bus routes.

As you can see, we are taking the steps necessary to improve our city's quality of life.

While the quality of life in our neighborhoods remains a top priority, we must also address quality of life issues in our downtown.

Unfortunately, one of the biggest complaints we get involves panhandling.

I must admit, despite the best intentions of our administration and many elected officials before us, the problem has not improved.

I am hearing concerns from people who do not want to come downtown to shop, from business and tourism officials who say it's starting to affect business, and even from motorists who are tired of people begging at off ramps and intersections not downtown.

To be candid, I agree with them.

A few months ago we engaged many partners, including caucus leaders on the Council, Indianapolis Downtown, Inc., the Indy Chamber, VisitIndy, IMPD, homeless support organizations and many others to study the problem again.

We asked them to take a look at what other cities are doing and propose a solution.

These leaders, with my support, will soon introduce an ordinance that will strengthen the regulations on panhandling in our commercial business zones.

These regulations would prohibit both aggressive and non-aggressive panhandling, like people shaking cups and holding signs.

This ordinance also would expand the prohibition on panhandling outside of downtown between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 a.m.

And, it would prohibit panhandling near intersections, crosswalks, building entrances or parking meters.

Similar bans have been enacted in cities in Florida and Texas.

Let me be clear: This proposed ordinance is not an attack on our homeless population.

In fact, studies by the Coalition for Homeless Intervention and Prevention found almost none of the panhandlers downtown were actually homeless.

The activities of these panhandlers are designed to prey upon the charitable instincts of Hoosiers and our guests. They exist for their own profit, not for the charitable benefit of the less fortunate. Many of them even have shift changes. Most panhandling downtown and at our intersections is a racket, and it needs to stop.

I hope this ordinance will be adopted by the Council so people can enjoy downtown without having their sense of security threatened by people hassling them for money.

Indianapolis should be proud that we have such a relatively safe city.

Last year marked the third straight year IMPD reported fewer than 100 criminal homicides.

You'd have to go pretty far back in the history books to find the last time that happened.

Of course, we can't rest on our laurels. Thanks to great leadership and the dedication of the 1,600 men and women of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, we are working with community leaders and other partners to quickly deal with issues as they arise.

In response to a few highly publicized incidents downtown, we flooded the area with officers and volunteers and also worked with our partners to warn known troublemakers not to come downtown.

And last summer, IMPD North District helped the Glenview neighborhood deal with an increase in burglaries not just with more officers, but also by holding community meetings and helping people make their neighborhood less inviting to crime.

The result?

Burglaries in that neighborhood plummeted from 24 over a two-month period to just three in the following two months.

Great police work and community engagement led to the arrest of two suspects.

People slept easier and they are now calling police at the first sight of something out of the ordinary rather than wait to report a crime that already has occurred.

Cooperation between our public safety agencies and community leaders is getting stronger every day, and that is a very good thing.

We saw it last month with a tremendous outpouring of public support following the tragic accident that took the lives of Indianapolis EMS private Timothy McCormick and Specialist Cody Medley.

We saw it following the Southside explosion.

I cannot adequately describe the incredible coordination and unprecedented generosity from non-profits, the private sector, and the community at large following the Richmond Hill explosion.

Mary Bryan Elementary School, Southport Presbyterian Church, Ready Indy, the American Red Cross, and countless businesses and private citizens came together to help in that neighborhood's greatest time of need.



These examples and many others show that when we work together we can address the public safety needs of our city.

New Public Safety Director Troy Riggs and Police Chief Hite are engaging the community and our police officers looking for ways to encourage more collaboration and modernizing the way we do business.

Crime prevention and neighborhood improvement go hand in hand.

So, it makes sense that an area with a crime problem might also have code violations, illegal dumping, animal control issues and other issues where concentrated city resources can make a lasting difference.

So much of my job as Mayor focuses on matters that make a difference in our neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

It is not often that a local official can make a difference on a national and global issue. But the fact is we are right now, especially when it comes to breaking the transportation sector's addiction to oil.

As a retired Marine officer and veteran of the first Gulf War, I have long been concerned that our dependence on foreign oil compromises our national security.

History will not look kindly on us when reflecting on the past 40 years, as the U.S. and her allies participated in the greatest voluntary transfer of wealth in world history.

In fact, many experts make the case that the U.S. is funding both sides of the Global War on Terror.

Ever since the OPEC oil embargoes of the 1970s demonstrated that foreign countries could virtually cripple our domestic transportation energy supply, the U.S. and its allies have faced a growing problem.

Our transportation sector and our quality of life are dependent on foreign oil. It is that simple.

And that makes us vulnerable.

Being held hostage to foreign oil also means we have less strategic leverage when facing those who are hostile to our national interests.

There are real costs to this dependence. The tragedy of war. The separation of families.

We spend \$85 billion a year protecting oil infrastructure around the world in addition to the enormous costs of the conflicts.

That is money we could be using back home to reduce the deficit or direct to other critical needs in our country.

I know some people point to reduced imports of foreign oil and say we don't need to take this step any longer. They are wrong.

While US oil imports stand at their lowest level since 1999, we still imported about 40% of all our oil last year. This is unacceptable.

Think about it: despite high domestic production and decreasing imports – gas prices still hit near record highs last month with prices approaching \$4 per gallon.

Since oil and gas prices are determined elsewhere in the world, the only way we can protect our national security interests is to reduce our dependency on oil and find alternative energies to power our transportation needs.

In the past we had no choice but to live this way, but now we have the technology to change that dynamic.

And we'll save significant money to boot.

So in early December, I signed an Executive Order to move Indianapolis' entire city fleet to post-oil technology by 2025.

Yes, that's right: under this order, we will be the first city in the nation to do so.

Here is our plan:

First, for our non-emergency cars, we will only buy electric vehicles or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles moving forward.

We estimate this will save taxpayers approximately \$12,000 per car over the life of the vehicle.

Second, we will replace our entire heavy vehicle fleet, including snow plows and fire trucks, with vehicles powered by compressed natural gas.

And lastly, Indianapolis will partner with auto manufacturers to develop a real response-ready plug-in hybrid police car that gets at least 40-50 miles per gallon.

This would be a huge breakthrough. It would save taxpayers six million dollars a year. And, it would dramatically reduce our largest use of oil in the city.

It has been a very busy three months since we first announced this plan.

We've gotten incredible national and international coverage and interest.

People are talking to us, wanting to help and to get involved.

In January, I attended the North American International Auto Show in Detroit to discuss our initiative with automakers. Then I made our case at the US Conference of Mayors meeting in Washington, D.C. – where again other mayors, energy security leaders and the U.S. Department of Energy were eager to get involved.

We may be the first city to take such comprehensive action, but my goal is for other cities, states, federal agencies and the private sector to get on board so we can eliminate America's dependence on foreign oil.

This is becoming a national movement that is starting at the local level, and we started it.

It's time to bring the troops home.

In area after area, example after example, Indianapolis is taking the lead, doing exciting new things – and really we have only just begun.

I do not have to remind you about the great work that David Sherman and others did with our sewer problems – and how other cities now look to us to address their problems as well.

Last month, officials from Cincinnati visited our office to learn how we modernized our parking meter system, a deal that increased the city's net parking meter proceeds from \$339,000 in 2010 to \$2.5 million last year.

We are building on the great work started by Mayor Bart Peterson and are widely considered the capitol of education reform.

And now, we are taking the lead in the movement to rid our transportation sector from its dependence on oil.

As I travel, I am constantly amazed at the number of people who come up to me across the country to remark about all the great things happening in Indianapolis.

We live it every day, so maybe some of us take it for granted – but that's ok because it's true.

Our city is filled with great people and a lot of exciting new projects and opportunities.

So, celebrate with me Indianapolis – just for a moment – because we have earned it.

And then let's get back to work.

Thank you very much.

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